

The Civic Green

RecycleBank News

What's new, what's cool, and what's super-green all at the same time? It's RecycleBank, the new program that rewards you for recycling. RecycleBank is now active in the community and Morgan Hill is the first city in California to implement the program citywide. If you haven't registered, you're already missing out on an assortment of great rewards that can save you money on gifts, services, and everyday purchases. You go to RecycleBank.com or call 888-727-2978 to order your rewards (like custom coupons for things you actually buy) which then get mailed to you. In order to view and redeem your points, you must first register with RecycleBank. Visit www.RecycleBank.com or call 1-866-563-0114 to get started. Remember – you need to register or “activate” your account in order to get your points. Why not activate today?



What's Wrong With Washing My Car?



There's no problem with washing your car. It's just how and where you do it that's important. Many people

enjoy washing their vehicles at home, providing water restrictions are not in effect, but few people realize that this is one of the most environmentally unfriendly chores that we can do.

Think of all of the pollutants that collect on your vehicle causing it to be dirty. Dust particles from dirt, brake wear, engine leaks and other sources that collect on your car or truck's surface are washed into nearby waterways when you wash your car at home. Heavy metals such as copper can come from your brake pads and cadmium, lead, and zinc can come from your tires. Most soaps contains phosphates and other chemicals that can negatively impact water quality and marine life. The phosphates from the soap can cause algae to grow. Algae looks bad, smells bad, and degrades water quality. As algae decays, the process uses up oxygen in the water that marine life need to survive.

Algae can also block the sunlight necessary to support healthy aquatic plant life. If you are washing your vehicle on your driveway or in the street, the soap, together with the dirt



and oil washed from your car, runs down the curb and into the nearest storm drain which leads right into our local streams and creeks. Water that flows into the storm drain, unlike the water which enters the sewers, does not undergo treatment before it is discharged into our waterways.

Did You Know?

To wash a car, the average homeowner uses more than 100 gallons of water.

The water then goes down the storm drain carrying pollutants to our local streams and creeks.

The average car wash that recycles water uses less than 30 gallons per car.

Commercial car washes drain their waste into the sewer system where it is treated before being discharged back into the environment.

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Styrofoam and Aseptic Packaging No Longer Recycled

Morgan Hill added expanded polystyrene (Styrofoam) and aseptic packaging (juice boxes, milk cartons, etc.) to our recycling program in 1999. Unfortunately, due to the rising costs of processing and transporting these materials, the market has evaporated and they are no longer included in the Morgan Hill curbside recycling program. Recycling only occurs when the products we all separate out for recycling actually get incorporated into a new product. In order for this to occur, the product has to be easily processed, easy to transport to market and there has to be sufficient demand for the processed commodity. Aseptics are made up of several different layers or different materials, making them costly to process. Styrofoam is light and bulky making it very costly to transport. Currently, virgin feedstock is cheaper than recycled feedstock for these materials and demand has disappeared. While efforts have been made to prop up the markets for Styrofoam and aseptic packaging, these efforts are not sustainable and the market has failed. Try to avoid these products, when possible, to minimize waste and maximize resource conservation.



Washing your car doesn't have to impact our water resources. Taking your car to the local car wash instead of washing it at home might seem like a guilty pleasure, but from an environmental perspective, it is often the better choice. Why not visit one of our local car wash facilities? They reclaim and recycle their water, use biodegradable products and treat their wastewater.

We have teamed up with three of our local car wash facilities to provide an incentive! Be on the lookout for a coupon in your July water bill for \$2.00 off of any car wash at the Chevron Vineyard Car Wash, 15865 Monterey Road, The Chevron Cochrane Car Wash, 851 Cochrane Road, or the Morgan Hill Car Wash, 16225 Monterey Road.

If you must wash your car at home, choose a biodegradable soap or make your own by mixing one cup of liquid dishwashing detergent and 3/4 cup of powdered laundry detergent (each should be chlorine and phosphate free and non-petroleum based) with three gallons of water.



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The area that you select to clean your vehicle on is important. Find a grass, gravel, or porous area that will absorb the wash water rather than carrying it to a storm drain. The grass and/or soil serves as a natural filter to absorb pollutants.



Waterless car wash products are good for small jobs. They are handy for spot cleaning and are applied with a spray bottle and then wiped off with a cloth.

Use a water-saving hose nozzle. A nozzle with adjustable spray settings and automatic shut-off can save as many as 70 gallons per wash.

Dump your dirty soap bucket into a sink or toilet. These drain into the sanitary sewer (instead of the storm sewer).

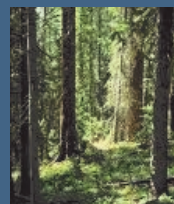
Tell a Friend About Civic Green

Do you enjoy having "The Civic Green" delivered to your inbox each month? Don't keep it to yourself - spread the word! Tell your friends to visit www.morganhill.ca.gov, go to "City Services" and click on the "Notify Me" tab. There they can subscribe to many helpful City publications including "The Civic Green".

This Month's Green Living Tip:

Think Green and Save a Tree

Perhaps because of their constant presence, many of us rarely consider the importance of trees in our environment. Trees provide shade in the summer and insulation from the elements in the winter. They absorb CO2 from the air and produce oxygen for us to breathe. What can you do to help protect this valuable resource? Here are some tips to get you started: Plant a tree in your backyard with your family. Reuse wrapping paper,



gift bags, tissue and bows. Think before you print. Check out library books instead of buying new ones. Use cloth towels and napkins instead of paper ones. Switch to reusable grocery bags instead of paper or plastic. Recycle all of your newspapers and junk mail. Pack your lunch in plastic containers that can be washed and used again. Do your part to ensure that future generations will have the opportunity to enjoy the beauty and health benefits of a forest.